

D# 33 PARKING STANDARDS

General Description

This docket item is a re-evaluation of the City's parking standards and the addition of bicycle-parking standards to Title IV. Historically, the City has processed many parking modifications, through Current Planning projects, to reduce the required number of parking spaces for commercial and residential developments.

Staff evaluated the adequacy of the City's current parking standards by comparing our standards to other jurisdictions, including but not limited to Seattle, Bremerton, Edmonds, Kirkland, Lacey, Port Angeles, Port Orchard, Sacramento, California, and Bend, Oregon, in addition to looking at "best practices" literature for parking standards. As a result of this evaluation, staff is proposing to reduce the parking standards in many use categories, including attached residential, residential parking for mixed-use commercial, hotels, office, on-site services, bowling alleys, shopping centers, and colleges and universities. In addition to the reduction in minimum parking standards, staff is proposing to include some housekeeping changes to the parking code.

Secondly, staff evaluated the need to include bicycle-parking requirements within Title IV. The Comprehensive Plan indicates that bike storage facilities, lockers, and racks should be encouraged. The Comprehensive Plan encourages a multi-modal transportation system. Based on these goals, staff is proposing to include bicycle parking in Title IV. Bicycle parking would be provided in two forms: long-term and short-term. Long-term bike parking should be in a safe weather protected area that would be utilized by bike commuters and/or residents of multi-family developments. Short-term bike parking would be for retail and commercial uses and would be in the form of bike racks. Staff recommends bike parking requirements for attached dwellings, office, eating and drinking establishments, retail, on-site services, clothing or shoe repair shops, shopping centers, religious institutions, medical institutions, elementary and junior high schools, senior high schools, and colleges and universities with an exemption for all new developments under 5,000 square feet.

Impact Analysis

Effect on rate of growth, development, and conversion of land as envisioned in the Plan

The proposal's effect on the rate of growth, development, and conversion of land as envisioned in the Comprehensive Plan is not expected to change.

Effect on the City's capacity to provide adequate public facilities

This proposal is not anticipated to have any effect on the ability of the City to provide adequate public facilities. The proposed addition of bike parking and the reduction in the amount of required parking may reduce impacts on public facilities. If there's an increase in bicyclists and a reduction in vehicle trips because of the availability of bike storage and parking, then there would be a similar reduction in impact to the City's street system.

Effect on the rate of population and employment growth

The proposal should not create an impact on either population or employment growth.

Whether Plan objectives are being met as specified or remain valid and desirable

The Comprehensive Plan objectives would remain valid and desirable in addition to providing direction for this proposed docket amendment. Specifically goal #4 of the Transportation Element states that the City should encourage an increase in pedestrian and bicycle travel by providing both safe and convenient routes and storage for the commuting and recreating public. Furthermore, Policy T-52 states "Bicycle storage facilities and parking should be encouraged within development projects, in commercial areas and in parks" and Policy T-53 states "Secure bicycle parking facilities, such as bike lockers and bike racks should be provided at residential, commercial and public establishments to encourage bicycle use." The proposed addition of bicycle parking would be consistent with the goals, objectives, and policies within the Comprehensive Plan.

The Plan encourages multi-modal transportation systems, and the use of alternative modes of transportation from the single occupancy vehicle. Objective T-R states "Promote a reasonable balance between parking supply and parking demand" and Policy T-66 states, "Appropriate parking ratios should be developed that take into account existing parking supply, land use intensity, and transit and ride-sharing goals." The reduction in parking standards would be consistent with the policies and objectives identified within the Comprehensive Plan.

Effect on general land values or housing costs

An effect on general land values is not anticipated by the proposed changes. Although, the high cost of parking on private developers increases the cost of development, which is passed on to the buyer through the cost of the dwelling unit. A reduction in the amount of parking required for multi-family developments would reduce the cost of development on the developer. In turn, the cost of attached dwelling units and/or multi-family style housing within the City could be reduced.

Whether capital improvements or expenditures are being made or completed as expected

No specific capital improvements or expenditures are associated with this proposal.

Consistency with GMA, the Plan, and Countywide Planning Policies

Elements within this proposal are consistent with State, County, and City policies. Renton's Comprehensive Plan Elements are reflections of state and regional growth policies at the local level. Many of the Plan objectives and policies cited above under "Whether Plan objectives are being met as specified or remain valid and desirable" are from the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan. The goal of this element is to "provide a balanced multi-modal transportation system that will support land use patterns, and adequately serve existing and future residential and employment growth within the City." A multi-modal system is one that provides various choices of transportation for the public such as automobiles, buses, rail transit, bicycles, and walking. Based on the Plan's goals and policies the proposed amendments would be consistent with GMA, Countywide Planning Policies, and the Comprehensive Plan.

Effect on critical areas and natural resource lands

No impact is foreseen.

Effect on other considerations

Currently within Title IV, the City has provided the opportunity for project applicants to request parking modifications, transportation management plans, and joint parking agreements.

Although these options are available to developers, the parking standards within our tables should reflect actual demand. Based on a study completed by Victoria Transportation Institute & Rick Williams Database, Seattle's minimum requirement of commercial uses is 2.5 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet with an actual demand of 1.75 spaces per 1,000 square feet. The peak weekday occupancy of these lots was cited at 70 percent. The City of Renton's commercial parking standards are approximately five spaces per 1,000 square feet, which far exceeds the actual demand indicated in the City of Seattle. For comparison, the Town of Beaverton, Oregon requires approximately four spaces per 1,000 square feet of commercial, resulting in a 45 percent peak weekday occupancy rate. Renton's commercial parking requirements currently exceed Beaverton's suburban parking standards.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends the reduction of minimum parking regulations for attached residential, residential parking for mixed-use commercial, hotels, office, on-site services, bowling alleys, shopping centers, and colleges and universities to reflect actual demand. Staff also recommends the addition of bicycle parking regulations within Title IV, in order to help facilitate the multi-modal transportation system goals within the Comprehensive Plan.

Implementation Requirements

Changes would be required within RMC 4-4-080 to reflect the reduction in minimum parking standards and accommodate for bicycle-parking standards.